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SUBJECT: Joint Monitoring Group Task Force, Goma, February 8

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Meeting of the Nairobi process's Joint Monitoring Group Task Force February 8 in Goma was a bit testier than usual. The Rwandan side leveled charges of co-location of FDLR and FARDC forces, regretted that the Congolese government was not living up to its timetable of actions to be taken, and took umbrage at the leakage to FDLR of the number of genocidaires (6,400) in the list that Rwanda had provided the previous week. The Congolese side, weakly represented, took umbrage at the Rwandans' umbrage. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) The Task Force established at the meeting of the Joint Monitoring Group December 22 held its eighth meeting in Goma February 8. Rwanda fielded its usual four-member team led by Major Franco Rutagengwa, while the DRC had only a two-member team led by Major Ambroise Nanga. Nanga apologized that Colonel Augustin Mamba was again taken up with post-Kivus Conference affairs in Kinshasa. Nanga said he realized that the DRC had fallen behind in its commitments under the FDLR plan it had provided to Rwanda December 1, including providing Rwanda an assessment of FDLR's military capabilities and willingness to repatriate. He again promised that Mamba would be present the following week and provide a "full assessment."

¶3. (SBU) Rutagengwa said that Rwanda had fulfilled all its commitments under the Nairobi communiqu . All that remained for it to do was to continue to encourage ex-FAR/Interahamwe elements to return to Rwanda and keep its border with DRC sealed. Moreover, it had operationalized the Task Force by inviting it on January 18 to observe first-hand all that Rwanda was doing to attract and reintegrate ex-FAR/Interahamwe. Task Force chairman Gernot Sauer of MONUC asked the DRC delegation when it would reciprocate, to which Nanga responded that DRC was not yet ready to say.

¶4. (SBU) Rutagengwa said that, illustrative of its strict border controls, Rwanda had arrested FDLR infiltrators in the Mururu sector on the South Kivu border ten days earlier. These infiltrators had confessed that they were part of FDLR's 2nd division and that it was co-located with FARDC's 8th Integrated Brigade at its base at Ruvungu. Rwandan delegate James Burabyo added that Rwanda would soon be providing information to the Joint Verification Team concerning similar co-location of FDLR's 2nd and 4th battalions with FARDC's 9th, 6th, 2nd, and 15th Integrated Brigades near Rutshuru. Burabyo pointed out that a close relationship between FARDC and FDLR, even to the extent that their military units were co-located, suggested that the DRC's sensitization campaign could only have limited success.

¶5. (SBU) Rutagengwa went to a wall map of the Kivu provinces and, pointing to it, said that the FARDC controlled the whole area, so he failed to see why DRC could not live up to its obligation under the December 1 plan, at least to inform Rwanda of the locations of FDLR

units. He wanted to ensure that the record showed that that plan called for DRC to provide Rwanda with full information on FDLR order of battle, to include, inter alia, leadership, recruitment and training, collaborators, coordinators and liaison officers, methods of gathering intelligence, supply routes, and modes of transport, as well as locations of FDLR.

¶16. (SBU) Nanga said, in response, that this set of complaints was difficult for DRC to accept. The Rwandan delegation was not proceeding in a spirit of fraternal cooperation to build mutual confidence toward a shared goal. The Congolese people had suffered for 14 years on account of the depredations of the ex-FAR/Interahamwe. DRC had information on infiltrations from the Rwandan side to assist rebellion within DRC, but it had the courtesy to refrain from airing such allegations in this Task Force but would rather wait to place them before the Joint Verification Team. Nanga said it would be better for Rwanda to concentrate on dissipating persistent rumors of ill treatment of FLDR combatants upon return to Rwanda than to call DRC's good will into question.

¶17. (SBU) In the absence of MONUC DDRRR chief Philip Lancaster, who was visiting Rwanda, World Bank expert Masse Walimba gave a short account of difficulties facing the effort to contact FDLR and persuade cadres to return to Rwanda. He noted that FDLR elements had said during contact the previous week that their leaders in Europe had told them that Rwanda had now produced a list of 6,400 genocidaires. Walimba noted that since the list exceeded the 6,000 estimated FDLR combatants in DRC, the local FDLR were drawing the conclusion that they would all be subject to arrest if they tried to go back to Rwanda. Poloff asked what percentage of these 6,400 were thought to be in DRC, and the EU's Jean-Michel Dumont asked what percentage were even thought still to be alive. Walimba said he had no idea. (In a subsequent conversation, SRSB Alan Doss -- to whom Rwanda had sent a copy of the list -- called the list "almost

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unusable.")

¶18. (SBU) The Rwandan delegation expressed outrage that the number of persons on this list, which was meant to have been confidential, had been leaked to the European leadership of the FDLR. Rutagengwa said that Rwanda had been extremely reluctant to provide the list. It had wanted all along that DRC finish its sensitization campaign before any such list was provided, but regrettably it had been pressured into doing so. Burabyo said that not all the persons on the list would be subject to arrest and that, in any case, there were likely to be more than 10,000 FDLR combatants in DRC, not 6,000.

¶19. (SBU) Nanga urged the Rwandan delegation not to become "overly pessimistic" about revelation of the number of persons on the list. DRC would do all that it could to ensure that this revelation did not destroy the process of returning FDLR to Rwanda, which both sides so earnestly wished. He added that DRC supported Rwanda in its call for a UNSC resolution condemning the FDLR.

¶10. (SBU) Sauer noted that, according to his latest information, the Joint Monitoring Group would meet at the level of the envoys in Brussels in one week, February 15. The Task Force would go forward with its next meeting, even if on the same day. Looking toward the tri-monthly revolving chairmanship, the Task Force agreed to recommend that the envoys decide their next chairman at that meeting, and thus the next chairman of the Task Force in Goma, from March 22.

GARVELINK